

# Walking in Victory: The Believer's Spiritual Warfare

## *Ephesians 6:10-12*

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Introduction: Opening illustration: "Who is the enemy?" Do you know who your enemies are? The Book of Ephesians can be divided into two sections: Chapters 1-3 describe the position of the Christian & chapters 4-6 detail the practice of the Christian. Another way to outline this book is to see the wealth of the believer in the first 3 chapters followed by the walk of the believer in the last 3 chapters. Warren Wiersbe divides this last section of Ephesians as a walk in unity (4:1-17), a walk in purity (4:18-5:17), a walk in harmony (5:18-6:9), & a walk in victory (6:10-24). This walk in victory indicates the warfare of the believer. Though it is a spiritual (& not a physical) warfare, it is still as real & deadly as any material war. Writers of previous generations spoke of the "Church Militant" on earth in contrast to the "Church Triumphant" in heaven. In looking at today's conditions, the term "Church Militant" has come into disuse: "It is no longer appropriate for the soft, compromising, worldly church of today" (Neal). But the reality is that Christians are in a conflict, & need to be properly informed as to whom it is against & with what it is to be fought. Note with me here in chapter 6 the admonitions to prepare & the adversaries to beware. We can walk in victory because our strength is in the Lord!

### I. The admonitions to prepare (:10-11 & :13)

#### A. "Be strong"

##### 1. The definition:

###### a. An exhortation >

- (1) Passive tense: 'be made strong'; 'be empowered.'
- (2) The believer is "...to let the power of the Lord be exercised in his life" (Kent).
- (3) The believer cannot strengthen himself but must be empowered continuously.

###### b. Some examples >

- (1) Acts 9:22, "...Saul increased the more in strength" (spiritually).
- (2) Romans 4:20, "...Abraham was strong in faith."
- (3) II Timothy 2:1, "...be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

##### 2. The demonstration:

###### a. "In the Lord" (His presence) >

- (1) Daniel 11:30, "The people who do know their God shall be strong, & do exploits."
- (2) Psalm 56:11, "In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do..."
- (3) II Corinthians 3:5, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God" (& cf. John 15:5).

###### b. "In the power of His might" (His power) >

- (1) "Power" - strength in operation (Its action).
- (2) "Might" - inherent strength (Its supply).
- (3) Usually the general's strength lies in his army. But in the army of the saints, the strength of each soldier lies in his General – the Lord of Hosts!

#### B. "Be suited"

##### 1. The illustration: "whole armour" >

- a. "Panoply" (*panoplian*) - cf. Luke 11:22, "all his armour."
- b. Roman soldiers were everywhere; Paul is being guarded by one there in prison.
- c. This term speaks of the complete suit of armor (a fully armed soldier).

##### 2. The implication: "Put on the whole armour of God" >

- a. The Christian is engaged in war. "Even a saved man has no inherent defense against Satanic power apart from the armour which God furnishes" (Kent).
- b. "Do not enter into battle with such adversaries naked & defenseless, but take to you armour. Do not cover one portion & leave another exposed..." (Eadie).
- c. The Christian is to rely upon his Lord & upon that only which his Lord supplies.

- C. "Be steadfast" ("*able to stand*" & "*stand*")
1. The opportunity: "*that ye may be able to stand*" >
    - a. With God's strength & armour, the believer is enabled to stand firm, & not retreat.
    - b. A military phrase ("*to stand*") - 'to stand in front of, with a view of opposing' ("*resist*").
  2. The opposition: "*the wiles of the devil*" >
    - a. "*Wiles*" - cf. 4:14, "*cunning craftiness*" (*metodias*) - Originally, a plan; it came to mean 'an evil plan, trick, or deceitful action'.
    - b. Be aware of Satan's devices: doubt, denial, distortion (Gen. 3); darts (6:16); & deception (II Cor. 11:13-15). He seeks to use our external enemy, the world, & our internal enemy, the flesh, to defeat us. [II Cor. 2:11 > bitterness; II Cor. 12:7 > pride; Acts 5:3 > greed]

## II. The **adversaries** to beware (:12)

### A. The **combat** - "*wrestle*"

1. Not against "*flesh & blood*"; it is not a struggle against unbelieving men.
2. Our foe is named Satan ("adversary") & the devil ("accuser") who is a strong enemy & who seeks to control people & cause them to oppose the work of God.
3. We do "*wrestle*" (only occurrence in N.T.); implies hand to hand combat (personal).

### B. The **combatants**:

1. "*Principalities & powers*" >
  - a. Speaks of the organization of the devil's kingdom (realm).
  - b. Eadie calls them "evil chiefs...fallen spirits, who once occupied positions of rank & prerogative in heaven & may still retain similar place among the hosts of apostate angels."
2. "*Rulers of the darkness of this world*" >
  - a. "*Rulers*" - 'world powers' - speaks of Satan (2:2) as the god of this age (II Cor. 4:4).
  - b. Realm of darkness - speaks of evil (not night); cf. 5:11, "*works of darkness*."
3. "*Spiritual wickedness*" >
  - a. Spiritual forces of wickedness (depraved abominations, occult, Satan worship, etc.)
  - b. "The spiritual cohorts of evil...their nature is evil, their commission is evil, their work is evil" (Eadie).

Summary: "Paul has reference to evil spirit beings under Satan's control, which oppose God & God's people & are a real force to be reckoned with" (Kent).

### C. The **combat zone** - "*in high places*"

1. Elsewhere translated "*heavenly places*" - 1:3 (spiritual blessings in the heavenlies); 1:20 (Christ seated in the heavenlies); 2:6 (believers seated with Him); 3:10 (God's wisdom made known in the heavenlies).
2. It is the sphere of our **wealth** – where Christ “over-rules” (1:3, 20, 2;6), the sphere of our **witness** – where angels “observe” (3:10), & the sphere of our **warfare** – where warfare “occurs” (6:12).
3. "Those evil spirits have invaded the church, are attempting to pollute, divide, secularize, & overthrow it; are continually tempting its members to sin & apostasy; are ever warring against goodness & obstructing its progress; & therefore believers must encounter them & fight against them 'in the heavenly places' " (Eadie).

**Conclusion:** We must face the reality of the spiritual conflict raging around us. Our warfare is against the world, the flesh, & the devil. Because Christ overcame the world, the flesh, & the devil, we do not fight for victory, we fight from victory! “The Spirit of God enables us, by faith, to appropriate Christ’s victory for ourselves” (Wiersbe). Yet we dare not under-estimate the power of the forces aligned against us. This realization ought not to make us give up in despair, but cause us to gird on the whole armour of God. James says, "*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, & he will flee from you*" (4:7). See I Peter 5:9. Will you be strong in the Lord & in the power of His might? Will you be suited in the whole armour of God? And will you be steadfast in order to oppose the devil's wiles? The combat is personal, a hand to hand struggle against spiritual forces. May we walk in victory!